1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

THE KASKA PEOPLE

Physically, the Kaska are American Indians with considerable white admixture. In skin color the Kaska range from the light tan of *métis* to medium brown. In spring when the people return to the post their faces often show blanched spots, apparently the marks of severe frostbite. The eyes are characteristically black, although brown and blue eyes occur in children of *métis*, and exhibit the epicanthic fold. Two men were noted who had rims of blue around the dark irises. The hair is generally straight, black, and thick. Old men and women have their hair streaked with gray. Bodily hair is normally light. Stature ranges from medium to small; obesity is infrequent. The faces of most of the people are relaxed and calm but otherwise expressionless, except when they smile or laugh (Pls. 2 and 3). Some individuals have sharp and pinched features, giving the impression of considerable inner tension.

As far as could be observed, the physical development and maturation of the Kaska child parallel that of American children, and are subject to the same vicissitudes when neglect and ill-treatment occur in infancy.[4] For example, at eighteen months Lenny Lang walked, but without perfect coordination, showing a tendency to run. He had four middle incisors, four lateral incisors, and four molars. He did not yet talk. At eleven months Terese Donnelly sat erect, crawled a little when permitted, and had four teeth—the two lower incisors and the two upper canines. She could pull herself into a sitting position by holding onto a support. At four months Sonny Maza smiled, kicked his legs, and showed one tooth just appearing. On the other hand, Irma, the daughter of Irene Wiley, who was starved and neglected during her first six or eight months of life, at twenty-one months pulled herself upright holding on, crawled and smiled but could not stand alone nor talk. Her teeth seemed normal. Old Man reported that little children, from about one to two years of age, are eager to pull off their clothing, a phenomenon also noted in American society.

Menarche occurs between fourteen and fifteen years, several girls having developed pregnancies between fifteen and sixteen years of age. The age of senile impotence could not be established, but may be inferred as occurring relatively late since River Joe, aged about sixty-three, complained of unsatisfied sexual desire following the death of his wife while Old Kean, aged seventy-four, tried to persuade a woman to live with him and actually lived with her for a week or so during the summer. One woman, aged forty-five, several times manifested strong sexual drive during intoxication. In appearance, women age quickly. No signs of senility were manifested by any of the two or three men aged sixty and over. Such signs, however, were observed in one woman, Old Metila, whose age was about seventy.

A tabulation of population figures for the Dease River, Upper Liard, and Nelson River Indians is shown in Table 2. Little reliance can be placed on the accuracy of reports before 1944, since no distinctions were made between tribal groups. All figures are from the Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs,[5] unless otherwise specified.

In 1945, the ethnographer estimated the population of the four Kaska tribes to total

[4] See Gesell and Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (1943).

[5] Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs* (1914-1934).